

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-02

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-15

SAM-01 OES-05 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-02 PRS-01

IO-10 /118 W

----- 080787

R 311113Z OCT 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9859

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 1255

UNCLAS EC BRUSSELS 9794

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, EEC

SUBJECT: SIMONET ARTICLE ON THE COMMUNITY'S ENERGY PROBLEMS

REF: EC BRUSSELS 9612

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN A SIGNED ARTICLE IN A WIDELY CIRCULATED BELGIAN DAILY, EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SIMONET SAID THAT THE FAILURE OF THE COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE A COMMON ENERGY POLICY MUST BE BLAMED ON THE COUNCIL, NOT THE COMMISSION. HE SAID THAT THE COMMISSION WILL, BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE YEAR, DRAW UP A GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF ENERGY PROBLEMS ACCOMPANIED BY PRECISE ACTION PROPOSALS. HE CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT IF THE COUNCIL FAILS TO ACT FAVORABLY ON THESE PROPOSALS, THE COMMISSION WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER THE USEFULNESS OF CONTINUING TO PRESENT THE COUNCIL WITH SOLUTIONS TO EUROPE'S ENERGY PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE OCTOBER 26-27 EDITION OF BELGIUM'S MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED DAILY PAPER, LE SOIR, CONTAINED A SIGNED ARTICLE BY EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SIMONET ON THE STATUS OF THE

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COMMUNITY'S EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE ENERGY CRISIS. HE NOTES THAT

ALTHOUGH TWO YEARS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CRISIS ALMOST NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE ON A COMMUNITY BASIS. HE BLAMES THIS LACK OF ACTION ON THE FACT THAT GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND THE PRESS HAVE LULLED THEMSELVES AND THE PUBLIC INTO A FEELING OF FALSE SECURITY. THE CRISIS IS STILL WITH US, HE ARGUES, AND OPEC IS SHOWING CONSIDERABLY MORE SOLIDARITY THAN THE EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS.

3. ACCORDING TO SIMONET, THE COMMISSION IS NOT TO BLAME. IT HAS MADE USEFUL PROPOSALS TO THE COUNCIL WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ADOPTED. HE CONCLUDES THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL IN ADVANCE OF THE CONSUMER-PRODUCER DIALOGUE TO ESTABLISH THE ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY NEGOTIATING POSITION. ACCORDING TO SIMONET: BEGIN QUOTE. (INFORMAL MISSION TRANSLATION) "THE COMMUNITY MUST DECIDE IF IT IS READY TO ESTABLISH A MECHANISM OF SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF UNEXPECTED EXTERNAL OIL SUPPLY DIFFICULTIES; THIS IS THE PROBLEM OF SOLIDARITY IN CASE OF A CRISIS. IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO KNOW IF ONE WISHED TO CREATE TOGETHER CONDITIONS PERMITTING INVESTMENT TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES AND TO GUARANTEE THE INVESTMENTS AGAINST FLUCTUATIONS IN OIL PRICES; THIS IS THE QUESTION OF A GUARANTEE SYSTEM. (THE FLOOR PRICE IS ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY.) IT IS EQUALLY NECESSARY TO DECIDE WHETHER IS IS USEFUL TO AGREE ON CERTAIN MEASURES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL MEASURES, TO BALANCE THE EFFORT OF EACH MEMBER COUNTRY IN TRYING TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE ENERGY CRISIS.

"THESE QUESTIONS ARE FUNDAMENTAL. THE COMMISSION INTENDS BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE YEAR TO POSE THEM CLEARLY TO THE COUNCIL AND TO THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT. THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO DRAW UP IN THE NEXT WEEKS A GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF ENERGY PROBLEMS AS THEY EXIST AFTER TWO YEARS OF INACTION AND INDECISION. THIS ANALYSIS WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PRECISE ACTION PROPOSALS FOR WHICH THE ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION WILL CLEARLY MARK THE WILLINGNESS OF THE COUNCIL TO FOLLOW THE ROAD TOWARDS AN ELABORATION OF A COMMUNITY ENERGY POLICY WORTHY OF THAT NAME. EITHER THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE THESE PROPOSALS INTO CONSIDERATION, AND FROM THAT MOMENT WE CAN HOPE TO BENEFIT IN A REASONABLE TIME FROM AN ENERGY POLICY; ONE INVOLVING RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBER STATES BUT WHICH GIVES TO THE GROUP AS A WHOLE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING MORE WEIGHT IN

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INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND OF REDUCING ITS DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED ENERGY BY INCREASING ITS OWN INTERNAL PRODUCTION. ALTERNATIVELY, THE COUNCIL WILL NOT ACT, AND IN THIS CASE THE COMMISSION MUST CONSIDER THE USEFULNESS OF CONTINUING TO PRESENT THE COUNCIL WITH SOLUTIONS TO EUROPE'S ENERGY PROBLEMS." END QUOTE.

4. FULL TEXT OF SIMONET'S ARTICLE BEING POUCHED EUR/RPE,

LAMB.

5. COMMENT: SIMONET'S VIEWS AS EXPRESSED IN THIS ARTICLE
ARE CONSISTENT WITH THESE REPORTED REFTEL. IN PUBLISHING SUCH
AN ARTICLE IN A WIDELY CIRCULATED BELGIAN PAPER, SIMONET IS
STEPPING UP HIS EFFORTS TO PRESENT HIS ENERGY CASE TO THE
BELGIAN ELECTORATE. END COMMENT.GREENWALD

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ENERGY, POLICIES, EXPORTERS, IMPORTERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ECBRU09794
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750378-0974
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975102/aaaaabpm.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 EC BRUSSELS 9612
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 NOV 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <02 FEB 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIMONET ARTICLE ON THE COMMUNITY'S ENERGY PROBLEMS
TAGS: ENRG, EEC, (SIMONET, HENRI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006